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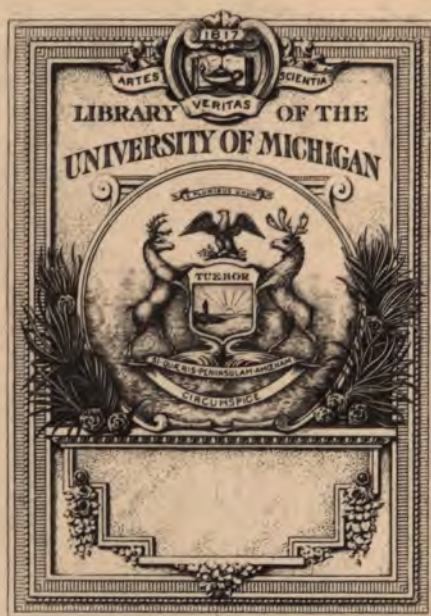
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THE PASSAGE OF THOROUGHFARE GAP

And the

ASSEMBLING OF LEE'S ARMY FOR
THE SECOND BATTLE OF MANASSAS

By a

Confederate Scout

With an introduction

By

Senator Daniel

Gazette print
York, Pa.
'1906

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Senator Daniel's Introduction.

Colonel John Cussons, of Glen Allen, is a typical representative of the "tight little island" that has sent forth its conquering spirits to the ends of the earth.

Throughout the Confederate war, and in many scenes of adventure, he wore under his grey coat next to his heart the "Lincoln Green," the badge of his nativity in Lincolnshire, England.

Far-west-adventurer, he learned from the sons of the forest, the prairie, and the desert, those astute methods of war which lie at the base of all military science.

By instinct a Confederate, and by adoption a

Virginian, he found genial companionship amongst the braves of the Army of Northern Virginia, and performed rare deeds of "high emprise," which, were they written out with a Hugo's pen, would complete a quartette of which Porthos, Athos, and Aramis are already members.

Colonel and Confederate veteran—scout, sharpshooter, staff officer and soldier of the line—a captive who walked coolly out of prison under salute of the guard—a sleuth upon the trail or a leader of the forlorn hope, as occasion suggested—country gentleman, combing the wilderness around him into forms of beauty, with lawns and lakes and deer-park and gardens—author, puncturing the shams and conceits of "some recent history" with brilliant and trenchant pen—man of affairs, creating an enterprise which has found development on both sides of the Atlantic—John Cussons is a character as solid as he is picturesque—as valiant as he is modest—as full of poetry as he is faithful to fact—and as gentle in manner as he is resolute of purpose.

Had General Cleburne remained a sergeant in the British army he might have been flung

into a trench among "the unknown dead;" but his genius rose with his opportunities; his splendid achievements bore him from rank to rank until, leading his hosts upon the ramparts of Franklin he fell, sword in hand, amid the plaudits and the lamentations of an army and a nation.

Had propitious fortune borne John Cussons to the martial rank for which nature designed him, he too would have worn a general's wreath. Mayhap too it might have lain—like Cleburne's—upon a soldier's bier. It was only a star he wore—a major's star—in the great battles of Northern Virginia—but that star shone with a radiant light wherever danger challenged or honor wove its imperious spell.

By my request this splendid soldier and noble gentleman has written the paper which follows:

It tells the story of the passage of "Thoroughfare Gap," in the Bull Run Mountains, when Jackson, beleaguered near Manassas, awaited with anxious heart the coming of Lee and Longstreet. It sheds light on a most critical conjuncture, and it invites investigation as to the sluggish movement of the First Corps when wings were wanted to expedite it.

We know how Jackson kept his gaze turned toward the mountain pass when the fortunes of battle were trembling in the balance, and we know how anxious Lee was that the march should be pressed and battle joined at the earliest possible moment.

Colonel Cussons saw, and marveled at the long delay; and he "the spearpoint" of Law's brigade, led his sharpshooters over the mountain and attacked the outposts and skirmishers so impetuously as to stampede the right flank of the enemy, who, in turn, carried disorder to the main body, which promptly retired—and thus opened a way to the relief of Jackson.

The late Dr. Hunter McGuire, Jackson's medical director, delighted in telling his comrades of the scene he witnessed when, at last, Longstreet was approaching—how John Cussons, galloping up to Jackson, drawing his long sword and sweeping it down to "present arms," told him that Longstreet was at hand: and how Jackson in intense feeling plied him with questions, and issued swift orders—ignoring the formalities and courtesies which are wont to such occasions.

But I am writing too long a prelude to Colonel Cussons' narrative, so I stop here and introduce

him as he starts forth from Thoroughfare Gap on the morning of August 29, 1862, to "find or make a way" and let Stonewall Jackson know that the pass was open, and that Lee and Longstreet were marching to his rescue.

Colonel Cussons' Letter.

Forest Lodge, Glen Allen, Va.,

August 8, 1905.

Hon. John W. Daniel,

Senate Chamber, Washington, D. C.

My Dear Senator:--I distinctly recall the incident to which you allude, and take pleasure in complying with your request.

It was between dawn and sunrise on the morning of August 29, 1862, that I was directed by General Law to take the scouts and sharpshooters who had scaled the mountain, and open communication with Jackson. I was not to seek an action or encumber myself with prisoners,

but to press forward, with the sound of the guns for my guide.

A point of instruction from General Longstreet placed Jackson south of the Warrenton turnpike and at or near his old battlefield on the Henry House plateau. But this was a mere guess, as the event soon proved.

From the beginning of Jackson's detour our communications had been uncertain and irregular. The Jessie Scouts had been unusually active in cutting off our dispatch bearers; so much so that a strong cavalry force had become necessary to perform the customary service of a single horseman.

Many of these so-called "scouts" had clothed themselves in Confederate uniform, and were making short work of our guides and couriers.

They were a ruthless brood—those Jessie Scouts—best forgotten, perhaps; as indeed they should be in this instance were it not that certain features of Pope's campaign would be unintelligible without some reference to them.

Well, it soon became clear that Jackson was not on his old stamping ground,—not on or near the spot where Bernard Bee, a year before, had bestowed on him in battle baptism that immortal name, "Stonewall."

It was quite evident that the Federals were covering the ground in question, for on reaching Haymarket, there lay the plain trail of Ricketts, stretching directly toward Gainsville. The trail was fresh—only a few hours' old—and it was still enriched by the debris of a hurried night march.

This presented chances which seldom arise in the beaten paths of war,—chances which haunt the imagination and inflame the fancy of youthful warriors in their day dreams of victory—or spoil.

It seemed “sinful;” aye,—“a deliberate flying in the face of Providence”—as one of my fellows phrased it—to neglect so golden an opportunity.

But my task was to find Jackson, and to lose no time about it.

So I held a course more northward than that prescribed, and swept along the fringe of broken country lying back from the open road, neither attacking nor being attacked by the prowling bands which infested the hills and valleys on the southward side of the turnpike.

Often, on rising ground south of the road there appeared patrols of cavalry, and occasionally a reconnoitering party of some strength.

This also presented a sore temptation to my people, who longed to transform themselves into mounted infantry, and who had no misgiving on the question of a possible rear-guard.

There were barely a hundred in my little band. But they were the pick of two splendid brigades—men of proven nerve, and tested skill, and dauntless daring—men of initiative, enterprising and self-reliant—youths of adventurous spirit who carried into war the passion of the chase—huntsmen, marksmen, foresters, deer-stalkers—men cradled in the saddle and familiar from boyhood with woodland life.

The only thing to be apprehended was an ambuscade by Jessie Scouts—an ambuscade which might paralyze or destroy us by a treacherous volley before we could force a disclosure of their real character.

To advance by skirmish line or deployed flankers was out of the question. There was no time for it. Celerity was the one thing which our mission demanded.

So I had recourse to a formation which was taught me five-and-forty years ago—a formation which renders an ambuscade impossible. My instructor, by the way, was Matto-Numpa, a na-

tive American, who subsequently tried conclusions with a certain George A. Custer, in the lonely valley of the Big Horn.

Do you care to know the method, Senator? It is very simple, and on many occasions it has served me well.

You throw forward a single line, with an interval of 150 to 200 yards between your men. In that way ten men will give you a probe a mile long. Your orders are shouted from man to man, and your communications are instantaneous and perfect. The leader holds his appointed course, head up and with swinging stride—climbing the heights, plunging through the thickets, penetrating every hiding place that lies within effective range of your march.

And in this connection it may be noted that “effective distance” at a single object is something less than one-fourth the actual range of your weapon.

Now, Senator, observe the spirit of that march—its freedom, its sweep, its impressive audacity—no halting, no creeping, no field-glassing, no shelling the woods or beclouding the landscape, but every fellow forging forward as tho’ glory or supper awaited him.

Of course your leader may be entrapped easily enough, but that springs the ambush and reveals its locality. So at worst you have sacrificed one man, and gained in exchange an advantage of position which you can hold until the ambuscader deploys for defence, and then you may either join battle on equal terms or decline it altogether.

As a matter of fact an experienced bushwhacker will be pretty lively in breaking camp when he sees "that long snake" reaching out for him.

Now, if there is any secret in this alacrity of movement it is to be found in the simple principle that any man who is reasonably brave,—if charged with an honorable trust, and supported by the approving gaze of his comrades,—will incur any amount of peril, and will glory in it too—for a brief period. I distinctly said, "For a brief period."

That was the method of Matto-Numpa. At short intervals, ten minutes or less, he would order the leader "down," and the next would have head of column, and so on throughout the rotation. Thus each man in succession would have the post of peril, the post of honor, and a spirit

of generous emulation would inspire and enthuse them all.

Senator, it is not so with us. Let a man lead a desperate charge or successfully head a forlorn hope, and we push him forward on every occasion. Of course, he does not last long, and then we feel so sorry about it that we try to assuage our grief by talk of a monument.

That was not Matto-Numpa's way.

True, he was a heathen and a savage, but he would have worshipped such a fellow as Turner Ashby, and I tell you he would have kept him out of battle twelve moons in the year, even though he had to rip his garment into thongs to bind him.

Well, we swung along in that way until from rising ground we could define the battle. A brisk artillery duel was in progress across the Warrenton Road. From the open woods about a mile and a half west of Groveton my leader reported a group of mounted men, about half a mile off and in open ground. I galloped to the front, and the moment I cleared the edge of the woods the cavalcade came forward. Their formation and movement was irregular and my first thought was Jessie Scouts. The moment

they started for me I threw my horse on his haunches and held him with his flank toward them. They understood the gesture and instantly drew rein. Then a single trooper came forward, his sabre drawn, and we met in headlong charge, looking into each others' eyes as we passed. It was all right. He was one of Jackson's couriers, and I knew him.

The staff halted as I pulled up, and Jackson rode forward alone. He was agitated. His face was drawn and sunburnt and his features were working.

With scant ceremony I yelled, "Longstreet's through the Gap, and I reckon at Haymarket by this time."

"Who heads the column?" were Stonewall's first words.

And I answered exultantly, "Hood's Division, General; those gallant fellows who led your battle at Gains' Farm, and who ——"

But he cut me short savagely with, "What brigade, sir?" and his harsh tone stung me as a blow could scarcely have done.

"Texas brigade," I said, perhaps sulkily.

"Major," said the general, addressing a young staff officer, and pointing to the Warrenton

Road, "put the Texas brigade there! It's left on the Pike! Gallop, sir!"

The youth, with a swift salute, dashed in his spurs and bounded over the plain like a hunted stag. He was a lithe, handsome fellow of patrician aspect, with bold black eyes, a Marylander, they told me afterwards, Kyd Douglas by name.

Stonewall, still in the imperative mood, instantly asked, or rather demanded, with curt insolence: "Who follows Hood?"

And I answered, mildly, I hope, and deliberately I am sure, but with my blood boiling: "General Jackson, if you will recall the fact that the Texas Division has but two brigades—under its present organization—exclusive of the Hampton Legion—which has been recently assigned—and that, as I have already stated, the Texas Brigade is in advance—I do not see how we can escape the logical inference, etc., etc., etc."

But before I had uttered five words Jackson turned to another of his staff with "Put Law's right on the pike, his left here!"

No need to say "gallop" to that one, for he was off like a shaft of light, and I sat there elab-

orating my point of logic, and staring into the shocked faces of the staff, and wondering in a half-reckless way whether old Stonewall would hang me up or merely shoot me. For of all commanders, Stonewall Jackson was least to be trifled with. Blue-light elder tho' he was—and man of prayer—yet on points of duty or discipline there never lived a soldier who could more promptly wield the knife of Ehud or smite with the sword of Gideon.

But he simply crossed his wrists on the horn of his saddle, laid his face on the back of his hands, and apparently went to sleep.

I sat there, waiting to be dismissed or disposed of in some way, and trying to think that he looked just about as absurd as I really felt.

This situation must have continued for some two or three or possibly five minutes. It seemed an interminable time to me. And then that foremost soldier of the age slowly raised his face, and as I looked into his eyes all my resentment died away, and from that moment I have loved him. His manner, his mood, his whole appearance had changed. His gaze was steadfast, but no longer stern. There was something of authority in his mien—there was always that—but

there was pathos, too. The square jaw, the gloomy brow, the firm lips, must have been there, but I was not conscious of them. His eyes were moist, his voice low and musical. He asked many questions about our march. Its delays, the passage of the gap, the severity of the action there, the condition of the troops, the number of Federals at the Pass, and the route they had probably taken. He alluded to my method of handling flankers and asked if I was familiar with Indian warfare. And with deep feeling he spoke of the bitter combat of last night—a struggle in which so many of his own old command had fallen—the men who a year before on that same field—where they had turned the tide of battle—had made immortal the two simple words, “stone wall.”

His officers told me later that for three days and nights he had scarcely slept. From the day of his detachment he had been perplexing Pope by incessant maneuvers,—now offering battle, now eluding—at one moment holding the fords of Bull Run, and in an hour disappearing as though the earth had swallowed him—now concentrating his adversary at Manassas, and anon hurling him northward by his daring feint on Washington.

The spot on which I found Jackson was at the foot of Stony Ridge, a little east of Page's Lane, and barely a mile north of the Warrenton Road. In a word, it was a good mile, nearly due west of the little village of Groveton.

Jackson himself gave me the time—"nine o'clock"—but that must have been something like ten or twelve minutes after the moment of our meeting.

About half an hour later—that is, about half-past nine, a courier from Stuart galloped up with the cry that the head of Longstreet's column was at Gainesville. Soon after that written dispatches came in, and by half-past ten a thin line of flankers came into view, supported by skirmishers with their base on the Warrenton Turnpike. This proved to be the advance guard of Hood's division, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Upton, of the Fifth Texas.

By twelve noon the division was in line of battle, Hood's brigade on the right and Law's brigade on the left of the Warrenton Road. General Law's left extended to within half a mile of Stonewall's right, and this break was soon afterward supported, though not occupied, by Wilcox's three brigades, which had come up from the Hopewell Pass.

As we looked toward the west, dense clouds of dust obscured the turnpike, yet we could see Longstreet's columns swinging off to their right and deploying into line of battle. This brought them directly on Pope's flank—which was in the air—and some of us are still wondering why General Longstreet did not then and there spring forward his long lines and envelop the enemy's left and rear.

But Senator, the fate of that campaign pivoted not at all on the Groveton coalition, but on the passage of Bull Run Mountain at Thoroughfare Gap.

That is a strange story—not yet told. And the military student of the future will have a strange task when he shall attempt to sift and reconcile the contradictory accounts on that subject which sturdily confront each other today as valid history.

Early in the afternoon of the 28th, the Federal general, Ricketts, took position on the eastern side of the gorge. Ricketts had four brigades of infantry, two brigades of cavalry and six batteries of artillery—an army of ten thousand seasoned soldiers, whose sole duty was to hold

the pass against Longstreet's approach. That rugged cleft through the mountain was unsailable. The hand of nature never shaped a sallyport more fearsome—more impenetrable—and yet General Ricketts suddenly abandoned it without a battle and without apparent cause.

For some time the story went that Ricketts "retired at sundown under orders," but General Pope's chapter of lamentations effectually disposes of that theory.

Then it was set forth, and is still believed, that General Lee rushed a column through Hopewell Pass and thus turned the Federal right, but investigation will show that the Hopewell detachment—Wilcox's division—did not approach within five miles of the enemy neither did Wilcox emerge from his mountain fastness until Thoroughfare had been relinquished.

Indeed, for so small a force to have gone forth unsupported on the Federal side of the mountain would have been criminally perilous. No such move was contemplated. The real object in seizing Hopewell was to have an alternate base for forcing a passage by the main army.

In fullness of time—that is twenty-three years after the war—General Longstreet, in "Battles

and Leaders," Vol. II., pp. 512-526, lengthily and deliberately recounted the facts—as he then understood them; and that is that he carried the position by sending Hood's Division over the mountain. Even so able a military writer as Henderson accepts that story with unquestioning faith; as also does that most careful and diligent of annalists, John Codman Ropes.

On page 517, "Battles and Leaders," Vol. II., General Longstreet states that he arrived at Thoroughfare Gap "just before night." But General Longstreet is mistaken. His memory is at fault—unaccountably at fault. He reached the pass at high noon, and for four mortal hours he lay in bivouac by the roadside there, waiting for—I know not what. The troops were fresh. They had marched but eight miles that morning—from just beyond White Plains—with nothing in their front but a few squadrons of Buford's broken-down cavalry. A Jessie Scout, impersonating a Confederate guide, had attempted to divert the column northward, but had failed, and the detention—hanging included—had not exceeded thirty minutes.

When Longstreet arrived at Thoroughfare Gap the Confederate army was at the crisis of its

fate. Its severed wings must be swiftly reunited or Stonewall Jackson and his command must perish, and the campaign must end in direst disaster.

In his "Manassas to Appomattox," pp. 173-174, General Longstreet says it was reported to him that the pass was clear when he first approached it, and that later on news came of a heavy force of the enemy advancing from the eastern side. He therefore sent forward some skirmishers, but they were driven back and the Federals took possession.

Here is General Longstreet's description of the situation:

"Thoroughfare Gap is a rough pass in the Bull Run Mountains, at some points not more than a hundred yards wide. A turgid stream rushes over its rugged bottom, on both sides of which the mountain rises several hundred feet. On the north the face of the gap is almost perpendicular. The south face is less precipitous, but is covered with tangled mountain ivy, and projecting boulders, forming a position unassailable when occupied by a small infantry

and artillery force. As we neared the gap from one side, Rickett's Division of Federals approached from the other and took possession of the east side. This sudden interposition of a force at a mountain pass indicated a purpose on the part of the adversary to hold me in check, while overwhelming forces were being brought against Jackson. This placed us in a desperate strait; for we were within relieving distance, and must adopt prompt and vigorous measures that would burst through all opposition.

"Three miles (it should be five miles) north was Hopewell Gap, and it was necessary to get possession of this in advance of the Federals in order to have that vantage ground for flank movement, at the same time that we forced our way by footpaths over the mountain heights at Thoroughfare Gap. During the night I sent Wilcox with three brigades to Hopewell, while Hood was climbing over the mountain at Thoroughfare by a trail."

If we read General Longstreet's official report in connection with his "Battles and Leaders" article, and his account as given in "Manassas to Appomattox," we shall find that his varied accounts are quite destructive of each other.

For a number of years General Longstreet believed that General Ricketts retired during the night without pressure and, fortunately for us, left the pass unguarded. Later he accepted the Hopewell theory, but finally settled down to the conviction that Hood's Division scaled the mountain and won the pass.

I have already said that the Hopewell detachment had no bearing on the action, and I now state that, with the exception of a hundred sharpshooters, not one man of Hood's Division went over the mountain. General Law's brigade started, and climbed the western side and attained the summit, but was called back, and only the disobedient sharpshooters went on. All the rest of Hood's Division returned to their starting point and filed through the then abandoned pass with the rest of the army.

Although the fate of a great campaign had its turning point at that mountain pass, yet the Federal commander, General Ricketts, has not

one word to say about it in his official reports.

However, in his Fitz John Porter testimony, R. R., p. 216, series I., Vol. 12., he says:

“I retired from the gap just after dark on the 28th. I rested my division that night between Haymarket and Gainsville, and at dawn I marched to Manassas Junction. I left Thoroughfare because the enemy was turning my flank, and I left Gainsville because General King sent me word that he was retiring toward Manassas; that was all.”

Now let us turn to General Pope's report, as published in "Battles and Leaders," Vol. 2, pp. 460-494, and we shall see the situation from the Federal side. The hour is 9 o'clock on that same night of August 28th, and the general is congratulating himself on the crowning victory which he is going to win on the morrow. Jackson at last is surrounded, Longstreet is barricaded, and the government may prepare for glad tidings. Those were not General Pope's actual words, but only the spirit of them. What he said, when the morrow dawned, was:

“To my great disappointment and

surprise I learned that King's Division had fallen back toward Manassas," and that "neither Sigel nor Reynolds had gone to his support;" that "the route to 'Thoroughfare Gap had thus been left open by this wholly unexpected retreat;" that Ricketts had fallen back from 'Thoroughfare Gap "after offering ineffectual resistance," and that "an immediate change was necessary in the disposition of my troops."

Later on, General Pope expounds his grievances more fully. He says he "was compelled either to abandon the Rappahannock or risk the loss of Washington." 'The railroad had been torn up, and bridges burned. Hooker was out of ammunition. Porter "neither obeyed nor attempted to obey orders," but said "his men were tired and the night was dark and there was a wagon train in the way." General McDowell failed to support King's division at Groveton because "he wanted to tell me about the country, and he supposed me to be at Manassas,

whereas I had left for Centreville, so he started back, but lost his way in the woods, and there was therefore no one to give orders to Sigel and Reynolds," etc., etc., etc.

And now let us go back to the preceding evening, and look once more upon that mountain barrier which towered between ourselves and beleaguered Jackson.

It is true enough that, when quite ready, General Longstreet directed a series of desperate charges against the gap, but his assaults spent their force unavailingly, like billows on a rock-bound coast.

And then at the moment of despair, a certain Confederate brigadier came into the problem. A glance at that frowning pass—that deep and narrow gorge, walled in by rugged cliffs and swept by artillery—showed him the hopelessness of direct assault. But General Law was a man of resources—a commander whose skill and daring had added lustre to Longstreet's name on every field from Cold Harbor to Gettysburg—a commander who, at outpost, or on the exposed flank, or in the van, or as rearguard, had habitually been assigned the post of peril; until

in front of Round Top at Gettysburg he had firmly protested against the frontal attack, and as firmly insisted that the road to victory lay around the unguarded left of the Federal army.

And for that outburst of insubordination the gallant brigadier was duly entered on Longstreet's doubtful list along with other delinquents such as Ambrose Hill, John B. Hood, Jeb Stuart, Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee—for each of whom General Longstreet doubtless did his best—bestowing on them in full measure the compliment of his censure, the distinction of his disapproval, the tribute of his scorn.

Let us return to the gap. Skirmishing and cannonading are still in progress, but the massed assaults have ceased.

General Hood exchanges a few earnest words with General Law, and then, accompanied by a countryman on a rawboned horse, they follow a tangled path leading along the base of the mountain. The obscure trail is soon lost, the guide is dismissed, and General Law, left to his own devices, acts in his accustomed way.

He flings forward his pioneers, his scouts and sharpshooters, with instructions to find or make a way; and like stag-hounds from the leash, they lash up the face of the mountain.

The general, swiftly deploying, sweeps forward with his brigade—at some points encountering sheer walls of rock, at other points gaining ascent by climbing from shoulder to shoulder, but constantly ascending and converging toward the more accessible ways.

The Federal outposts and skirmishers yielded to the impetuous rush, and the sweep over the crest of the mountain was so impressive that General Ricketts believed his right flank to be imperiled by an actual turning movement. He therefore retired, and we followed his trail along the banks of Broad Run where we were glad to warm up our captured rations at his still smoldering camp fires.

Just as General Law was passing the summit of the mountain he was recalled. "The gap was open," they said. Of course he knew why it was open, and he shouted back a request that he might go on. But the order was imperative, and so he collected his troops and made a long detour back again, finally passing through the gap and going into bivouac at a point which he could have reached in fifteen minutes if he had been allowed to complete his aggressive turning movement.

The sharpshooters disobeyed the order to return. They knew their success resulted from a mere stampede—this springing of a surprise at dusk in a broken country—so they edged toward the eastern entrance of the gorge and took a strong position among the rocks, naturally expecting a cavalry charge when the real nature of the situation should be disclosed, for that little band, those hundred riflemen, were the only Confederates on General Rickett's flank.

Never, perhaps, in all the tide of time was an unnoted stroke of war more fruitful of results than was that headlong scramble over the mountain.

It saved Stonewall Jackson from destruction; it opened the way for Longstreet; it reunited Lee's army; it made the second battle of Manassas a possibility and an actuality, and it thus crowned the campaign of 1862 with the best balanced battle and the most brilliant victory ever lost and won on American soil.

Had that dash been made a little later, or with less spirit, or with more deliberation, it could not have won its way. The Federals would have made good their seizure and held their ground. There would doubtless have been a series of

deadly struggles around the Hopewell and Thoroughfare Passes, but there would have been no second battle of Manassas.

Thoroughfare Gap was the pivot point of that campaign, yet it is still shrouded in doubt and darkness; and we could hardly blame a perplexed student of it if he should indignantly declare that all military history is but "an accepted fable," a mere "distillation of rumors."

General Longstreet, as we have seen, describes our situation as "desperate," but adds that on the morning of the 29th we fortunately found that the enemy had retired, whereupon, he says, we marched through the gap and joined the forces of Jackson. See "Battles and Leaders," Vol. 2, pp. 517-518. "Our apprehensions," he says, "were relieved at the early dawn of the 29th, by finding that Ricketts had given up the east side of the gap."

There is not—there cannot be—a more astounding fact in military history than this forgetfulness on the part of General Longstreet.

The campaign was at the crisis of its fate, and yet General Longstreet did not know that his own troops had won the pass at twilight on the 28th, or that a number of his troops bivouacked

on the eastern side of the mountain that night—among them, to my personal knowledge, the Fourth Alabama, the Second and Eleventh Mississippi, the Sixth North Carolina, the Eighteenth Georgia, the First, Fourth and Fifth Texas, and the batteries of Major Frobel and Captains Bachman and Reilly.

The true hero of Thoroughfare—the officer whose skill and daring won that pass and saved that campaign was Major-General E. M. Law, who ought to be required, in the interest of truthful history, to cast his modesty to the winds and set down the full and exact facts.

This letter has lengthened beyond all reason, Senator, yet I cannot leave the subject without asking three or four simple questions:

1. Why is not General Ricketts' Thoroughfare Report in the records?
2. Why is it that no copy of that report can anywhere be found?
3. Why do the records neglect to mention the losses sustained by General Ricketts in this "battle?"
4. Why is it that neither General Wilcox nor any of his troops have ever claimed credit for that priceless service which historic rumor ascribes to them?

